

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 032662

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EGEN, ETRD, EINV, ASEAN

SUBJECT: US/ASEAN ECONOMIC CONSULTATIONS

FOLLOWING IS A REPEAT
QUOTE

R 140853Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3904
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EGEN, ETRD, EINV, RP, ASEAN
SUBJECT: US/ASEAN ECONOMIC CONSULTATIONS

REF: A) STATE 283832 OF DEC 31, 1974
B) STATE 232607 OF SEPT 30, 1975
C) STATE 263202 OF OCT 23, 1976

D) MANILA 16803 OF OCT 29, 1976

1. DURING DECEMBER 10 CALL BY POLITICAL AND ACTING E/C COUNSELORS TO REVIEW ASEAN DEVELOPMENTS, AMBASSADOR (MRS.) ROSARIO MANALO, DEPUTY SYG OF THE PHILIPPINE ASEAN NATIONAL SECRETARIAT IN DFA, INFORMED THAT THE STANDING COMMITTEE DECIDED AT ITS NOVEMBER 17 MEETING IN SINGAPORE THAT "THE PHILIPPINES SHOULD CONTINUE FURTHER THE (SIC) INFORMAL DISCUSSION WITH THE UNITED STATES ON A US/ASEAN DIALOGUE." THE PHILIPPINES, THE SAID, HAS BEEN DESIGNATED AS THE CONTACT POINT FOR THE UNITED STATES, AND HENCEFORTH ALL APPROACHES BY THE USG SHOULD BE TO HER OR TO HER DEPUTY, MR. JOSE FERNANDEZ, DURING THE NEXT MONTH AND HALF WHEN SHE WILL BE ON MATERNITY LEAVE. SHE ADDED THAT THE USG SHOULD AVOID SEPARATE APPROACHES IN OTHER CAPITALS BECAUSE OF THE CONFUSION THIS WOULD CREATE.

2. MRS. MANALO STRESSED THAT THE CONSULTATIONS SHOULD BE ON SUBJECTS OF ASEAN ON REGIONAL INTEREST AND NOT BECOME AN UMBRELLA FOR BILATERAL MATTERS. THE TOP PRIORITY WHICH ASEAN PLACES ON SUCH CONSULTATIONS IS TRADE. THEREAFTER OTHER AREAS OF COOPERATION WITH ASEAN COULD BE PROPOSED, AND SHE CITED THE EXAMPLES OF PETROLEUM EXPLORATION BY CANADA, CONSUMER MARKETING BY AUSTRALIA, AND FORESTRY BY NEW ZEALAND. SHE THEREFORE LOOKED FORWARD TO INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS WITH THE EMBASSY TO PREPARE FOR THE CONSULTATIONS, AND CONCLUDED BY AGREEING THAT THE FORMAL REQUEST FOR CONSULTATIONS CONFIDENTIAL

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(WHICH ON THE BASIS OF PRECEDENT ARE MADE TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE) COME ONLY AFTER INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS HAD PRODUCED AN AGENDA.

3. THE ACTING E/C COUNSELOR POINTED OUT THAT IT WOULD TAKE SOME TIME TO STAFF OUT CONSULTATIONS, AND NOTED THE PENDING CHANGE IN US ADMINISTRATIONS. MRS. MANALO SAID SHE UNDERSTOOD. ASKED DIRECTLY ABOUT POSSIBLE ADVERSE VIETNAMESE REACTION TO US/ASEAN CONSULTATIONS, MRS. MANALO SIMPLY SHOOK HER HEAD, SHRUGGED SLIGHTLY, AND SMILED -- ALL IN PREGNANT SILENCE. WHATEVER THAT MEANT, IT APPEARED THAT SHE DID NOT CONSIDER SUCH REACTION AN OBSTACLE. SHE INDICATED SEVERAL TIMES DURING THE CALL THAT SHE HAD A CLEAR DIRECTIVE FROM THE STANDING COMMITTEE AND EMPHASIZED THAT POINT BY REREADING THE DECISION WHICH IS QUOTED ABOVE.

4. COMMENT: IT APPEARS FROM THE NOVEMBER 17 STANDING COMMITTEE DECISION THAT THE ASEAN COUNTRIES ARE NOW

READY FOR A US-ASEAN DIALOGUE AND THAT THE PHILIPPINES HAS A MANDATE TO UNDERTAKE INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS WITH THE U.S. WHICH COULD LEAD TO FORMAL CONSULTATIONS. IT MAY BE THAT SOME ASEAN COUNTRIES (E.G. MALAYSIA) STILL HAVE RESERVATIONS ABOUT FORMAL US-ASEAN CONSULTATIONS BECAUSE OF THE ANTICIPATED VIETNAMESE ATTITUDE TOWARD SUCH A DEVELOPMENT. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE IT IS IN OUR INTEREST TO RESPOND POSITIVELY TO THIS CLEAR ASEAN/GOP SIGNAL THAT INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS WITH THE US ARE IN ORDER. WE WOULD CROSS THE FORMAL CONSULTATIONS BRIDGE WHEN AND IF WE COME TO IT.

5. ACTION REQUESTED. WE RECOMMEND THEREFORE THAT THIS EMBASSY BE INSTRUCTED, IN THE RELATIVELY NEAR FUTURE, TO PURSUE INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS WITH THE GOP/DFA, ACTING AS ASEAN'S AGENT. PRIOR TO INITIATING ANY SUCH DISCUSSIONS, HOWEVER, THE DEPARTMENT WILL WISH TO
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CAREFULLY STAFF OUT POSSIBLE AREAS OF US/ASEAN COOPERATION. WE WOULD SUGGEST THAT THE GENERAL RUBRICS OF TRADE AND INVESTMENT ARE STILL GERMANE AND OF INTEREST TO ASEAN, BUT WE SHOULD BE CLEAR AS TO WHAT SPECIFIC ISSUES THEREUNDER WE WISH TO DISCUSS OR AVOID. ALSO, WHILE WE SHOULD AVOID ANY AID COMMITMENT OR ANY AID-TYPE OF PROJECT, WE BELIEVE IT APPROPRIATE, AS A MEANS OF RECOGNIZING AND PROMOTING THE ASEAN IDENTITY, TO CONSIDER A COOPERATIVE VENTURE INVOLVING REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT. FOR EXAMPLE, A PROJECT WHICH WE MIGHT ADVANCE FOR THE DEPARTMENT'S CONSIDERATION WOULD BE SPONSORSHIP OF AN US/ASEAN CONFERENCE ON TOURIST DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT.

6. WOULD WELCOME DEPARTMENT'S AND ASEAN POSTS' VIEWS.

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